United Nations S/2010/35

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 January 2010

Original: English

## Letter dated 19 January 2010 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication dated 8 January 2010 (see annex), which I have received from the Deputy Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mr. Claudio Bisogniero, transmitting the quarterly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 August to 31 October 2009.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

## Annex

### Letter dated 8 January 2010 from the Deputy Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach the report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) covering the period from August to October 2009 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the present report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Claudio **Bisogniero**

Enclosure

# Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

## Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the renewed request under Security Council resolution 1890 (2009) to report to the United Nations on the progress of the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), covers the period from 1 August to 31 October 2009. As at 31 October, total ISAF strength stood at 80,123 personnel from 28 NATO nations and 14 non-NATO nations.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF has continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 August to 31 October, ISAF suffered 1,446 casualties, including 170 killed in action, 1,260 wounded in action and 16 non-battle-related deaths.

3. During this reporting period, General McChrystal, Commander of ISAF, provided his initial assessment of the mission in Afghanistan. On 23 October, the Commander spoke to the NATO defence ministers in Bratislava on the current situation in Afghanistan and on his assessment of the mission. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Kai Eide, was present. At the meeting, the ministers adopted four key NATO priorities: to improve the protection of the Afghan people; to build the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces and facilitate their lead role in security; to facilitate governance and development; and to engage with Afghanistan's regional neighbours, especially Pakistan. These priorities are reflective of the renewed Security Council resolution on Afghanistan, which recognizes the importance of sustainable progress in security, governance and development and expresses serious concern for both the increase in violence in Afghanistan and the high number of civilian casualties. To address these issues, the Commander, with the endorsement of the North Atlantic Council, has refocused his campaign priorities on protecting the Afghan people and on embedded partnering in order to achieve better governance, rule of law and national security forces. During this reporting period, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan was established to consolidate and standardize the efforts of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, led by the United States of America, and the ISAF Directorate for Afghan National Army Training and Equipment Support programme. In addition, the ISAF joint command was established to improve unity of command and unity of effort to the missions of the five regional commands.

## Security situation

4. Insurgent activity throughout Afghanistan during the quarter was higher than the same period in 2008. Insurgents avoided direct confrontation, choosing instead to utilize improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks as their primary method of attack. The insurgency continues with its efforts to stir up instability and influence the population by undermining their faith in the ability of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to provide security. Regional security situations are as follows:

(a) *Regional Command* Capital: Insurgent activity decreased following a spike in events during the electoral process. It is anticipated that insurgents will now focus on the reorganization and provision of supplies to enable similar attacks in the near future. The threat level in Kabul will remain high in the foreseeable future;

(b) *Regional Command* North: Security in Regional Command North is relatively stable compared to other regions, and most provinces show declining insurgent activity. Despite this, Kunduz and Baghlan faced a growing number of incidents induced by key activists and facilitated by external support;

(c) *Regional Command* West: Although insurgent activity remained at relatively the same level as the previous period, the insurgents made efforts to disrupt the electoral process throughout the region, particularly on election day. Due to successful operations against some of the most active insurgent leaders, the security situation in Herat Province is expected to improve steadily;

(d) *Regional Command* South: Insurgent activity remains focused on Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. ISAF operations and expanded presence threaten insurgent safe havens and disrupt insurgent supply lines. Counter-narcotics operations have influenced the activities of some traffickers in the region, forcing them to temporarily move these activities into other areas;

(e) *Regional Command* East: Following the election day surge in events, insurgent activity has decreased but remains high in Kunar, Paktika, Paktiya and Khost. The successful operations of the Pakistani Armed Forces against radical militants in Swat caused, as a side effect, an influx of refugees. Insurgents focused their improvised-explosive-device attacks along Highway 1 in Wardak, Logar and Ghazni.

5. Improvised-explosive-device attacks remain the main cause of casualties among ISAF, the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan civilians, with a total of 1,208 detonations during the reporting period. During the same period, 1,302 improvised-explosive-devices were discovered, representing 52 per cent of all improvised-explosive-device events, defined as detonations, discoveries, turn-ins by local nationals or predetonations.

**Governance**

6. NATO continued to stress that the ISAF mission, as mandated by the Security Council, cannot be accomplished without the international community assisting the Government of Afghanistan in achieving the necessary concomitant improvement in the development and the governance of the country. Sustained security can only come with development and good governance. Lack of progress in development and governance solidifies mistrust of and opposition to Kabul in the population, which in turn undermines the establishment of security. NATO/ISAF underlines its readiness to continue to support the United Nations and UNAMA as the designated coordinator and leader of international efforts in Afghanistan.

**Afghan National Security Forces**

7. As at 1 November 2009, the Afghan National Police had a force strength of just over 90,000 growing towards 96,800. However, only 20 per cent of the force has followed a police reform programme, owing to a lack of qualified police mentorship teams. It is anticipated that the advent of a direct role for ISAF in

supporting police mentoring through police operational mentoring liaison teams within the framework of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan will ameliorate this situation, in addition to speeding up the growth of the force. Commitments from nations to provide such mentoring liaison teams are urgently needed to help with this issue.

8. Overall, Afghan National Army numbers are growing in a positive trend, with approximately 1,600 soldiers per month being added. If this growth rate is maintained, the Afghan National Army will reach its desired end state of 134,000 troops by December 2011. Provision of operational mentoring liaison teams, support to branch schools and equipment donations are key initiatives that influence field activities of the Afghan National Army. With the intent of rapidly building the size and quality of the Afghan National Security Forces, there will be a requirement for continued, as well as additional, support from the international community in order to accomplish that goal.

**Civilian casualties**

9. Minimizing civilian casualties remains a top priority for ISAF. Thanks to the implementation of the Commander's tactical directive regarding civilian casualties, there has been a marked reduction in the frequency of civilian casualty incidences attributable to friendly forces. However, mistakes have been made and non-combatant casualties continue to occur due to insurgent actions and the counter-actions of ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces personnel. These mistakes are continuously analysed and lessons learned are drawn from them in order to further reduce the possibility of recurrence.

**Counter-narcotics**

10. As mentioned in the previous report, military operations in isolation will not be sufficient without the effective enforcement of national narcotics laws and the wider National Drug Control Strategy. Historically, it has been proven that national institutions immune from the influence of drug producers and distributors are essential to good governance and to gaining and maintaining respect of the population. Due diligence must be shown in breaking the narcotics/insurgency nexus. Furthermore, in the light of President Karzai's renewed pledge to fight corruption, the Government of Afghanistan should also take measures to discourage any associative behaviours or practices between Afghan officials and narcotics producers/traffickers.

11. The international law enforcement operation has focused on identifying the smuggling of chemical precursors used for illicit narcotics, primarily along the borders of Afghanistan. This international effort, coordinated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), is a positive step in coordinating counter-narcotics activity in the region. Similar interdiction operations continue to prove that wherever drugs are found insurgent equipment is also found, including bomb-making material and weapons.

12. Alternative livelihood programmes have achieved positive results. During the reporting period, the wheat seed distribution programme to 39,000 farmers started in Helmand Province. Districts that received or will receive wheat seed include Nad Ali, Geresk, Lashkargah, Garmsir, Nowzad, Sangin and Musa Qalah. The recipients of wheat seed will contribute 700 Afghanis for their portion, equivalent to 10 per cent of the gross cost of fertilizer and seed.